



# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE *109<sup>th</sup>* CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2005

## *Senate*

### **VOTE FOR THE REAUTHORIZATION OF TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES**

Madam President, for the last 3 years that we have been in the Senate, I have been pushing my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, and pushing the administration and my colleagues in the House of Representatives to reauthorize Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. We first authorized it in 1996. There was a 5- or 6-year authorization that had lapsed, and we need to renew it and establish a path forward for welfare programs in my State, your State, and all other States across this country.

The Senate Finance Committee has approved unanimously, without dissent, legislation to reauthorize it for another 5 years. It is out of committee and ready to come to the floor. We should take it up, debate it, amend it, if we see fit, pass it, and go to conference with the House.

The House passed their own reauthorization measure, which is imperfect in my view. I will mention a couple of problems I have with it. As the Governor of Delaware and lead Governor of the National Governors Association on welfare reform, it occurred to me that if you want people to

get off welfare and go to work, they need help with taking care of their kids, and we needed to make sure they had decent health care for the children. If they don't have that, they are not going to be successful in going to work. The measure reported out of the Committee provided extra money for childcare support. It is needed.

There is another problem. Under current law, if you are on welfare, you have to work 30 hours a week. However, if you have young kids under the age of 6, you can work as little as 20 hours a week, not 30 or 40 hours. The House measure says everybody has to work 40 hours a week if you are on welfare. That may sound good at the outset, but if you don't have money for childcare to help with the extra time people are going to be working, it is not going to work. Say somebody has a week-old or month-old or year-old child. They are going to have to work 40 hours a week.

I ask for support on the motion. Let the committee bring the bill forward and debate it and vote and go to conference.